



SB 835 Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Collaborative Care Pilot Program
Senate Finance Committee

<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?id=SB0835&stab=01&pid=billpage&tab=subject3&ys=2018RS>

March 7, 2018

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Testimony on behalf of the Maryland-DC Society of Addiction Medicine (MDDCSAM), a professional society of physicians and associated health professionals in the field of addiction medicine; a chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine.

Proposed Amendment:

(III) REGULAR SYSTEMATIC PSYCHIATRIC AND/OR SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER CASELOAD REVIEWS AND CONSULTATION WITH A PSYCHIATRIST, OR ANY OTHER PSYCHIATRIC PROVIDER ADDICTION MEDICINE SPECIALIST OR OTHER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH MEDICINE SPECIALIST AS ALLOWED UNDER FEDERAL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE MODEL.

The overwhelming majority of mental health and substance use disorders are identified and treated in the primary care setting. But, frankly, these disorders are not treated nearly as well as they could be in this setting.

And these disorders are one of the greatest drivers of medical costs directly, and also because they are strongly associated with somatic illnesses.

I spent most of my career as a primary care internist. Eventually I developed a greater interest in treating these disorders. In retrospect, I recognize that, through most of my career, I did not treat these conditions in the best way. I didn't know what I didn't know.

Primary care providers work primarily in isolation. But they want to learn more about these disorders. There is no a substitute for interacting with a specialist regarding actual patients.

This is where the patients are – in primary care settings – and I don't think there's a practical way to expect very large numbers of people affected with these disorders, to see multiple providers in multiple locations. It's too inconvenient, and there is a behavioral health workforce shortage.

Also, collaborative care has the potential to help address the severe shortage of buprenorphine prescribers.

Treating most mental health and substance use disorders is not rocket science. A little bit of wisdom and experience can go a very long way, and is just what the doctor ordered.
